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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 10/024,854 | 12/18/2001 | Leon R. Hussey III | 470049.401 | 6550 |
| 500 | 7590 | 04/22/2004 | EXAMINER | |
| SEED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW GROUP PLLC 701 FIFTH AVE SUITE 6300 SEATTLE, WA 98104-7092 | | | REDDING, DAVID A | |
| | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| | | | 1744 | |

DATE MAILED: 04/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
| | 10/024,854 | HUSSEY ET AL. |
| | Examiner David A Redding | Art Unit 1744 |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 15 and 16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election without traverse of claims 1-14 is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
3. Claims 1,4-7,11,12, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the article, "Brewing and Using Tea".

The article discloses the use of an air pump (considered to be equivalent to an air blower), two or three lengths of plastic tubing for connection to the pump, and bubblers in the form of air stones connected to the opposite end of each length of tubing.

Page 2 of the article shows the brewing device comprising a container with the air pump mounted on the outside and the tubing rising up vertically from the pump to the top of the container and descending vertically downward into the bottom of the container.

Claim 4 specifies that the blower is disposed above the container. The reference article shows the pump resting on the ground next to the container. The court has held the mere change in position of an element of a device without a corresponding change in operation is not patentable. In re Japikse, 181 F.2d 1019, 86 USPQ 70 (CCPA 1950) (Claims to a hydraulic power press which read on the prior art except with regard to the position of the starting switch were held unpatentable because shifting the position of the starting switch would not have modified the operation of the device.

Claim 12 specifies that the air conduit and diffuser are unitarily formed. The reference discloses each as separate pieces. In re Larson, 340 F.2d 965, 968, 144 USPQ 347, 349 (CCPA 1965) (A claim to a fluid transporting vehicle was rejected as obvious over a prior art reference which differed from the prior art in claiming a brake drum integral with a clamping means, whereas the brake disc and clamp of the prior art comprise several parts rigidly secured together as a single unit. The court affirmed the rejection holding, among other reasons, "that the use of a one piece construction instead of the structure disclosed in [the prior art] would be merely a matter of obvious engineering choice.") Accordingly, making the plastic tube and bubblers unitary are considered to be obvious engineering choice.

The prior art article does not specify the flow capacity of the air pump. However, the article does recognize the relationship between the amount of oxygen available and the growth and viability of the aerobic microorganisms (page 1, second paragraph).

The courts have ruled that “[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” In re Aller, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). Accordingly, the claimed flow rates are considered to be obvious.

4. Claims 1,3-6,8,11, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USP 5,583,045 (Finn).

Finn discloses a compost curing device which includes an aeration apparatus comprising fans (36), a pvc air conduit (32), vertically arranged, and connected to an air diffuser in the form of a planar floor (10).

The prior art article does not specify the flow capacity of the air blower. However, the article does recognize the relationship between the amount of oxygen available and the growth and viability of the aerobic microorganisms.

The courts have ruled that “[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation.” In re Aller, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). Accordingly, the claimed flow rates are considered to be obvious.

5. Claims 1,2,4,5,9-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USP 5,417,736 (Meyer).

The Meyer patent discloses an aeration apparatus which includes an air blower (20) connected to a section of rigid vertical tubing (16) and further connected to air diffusers (14) consisting of perforated plastic tubing. The reference differs from the claims in that the blower (20) is positioned on the ground and not positioned in the air. The court has held the mere change in position of an element of a device without a corresponding change in operation is not patentable. In re Japikse, 181 F.2d 1019, 86 USPQ 70 (CCPA 1950) (Claims to a hydraulic power press which read on the prior art except with regard to the position of the starting switch were held unpatentable because shifting the position of the starting switch would not have modified the operation of the device.

The patent is silent as to the tubing being coiled shaped. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966) (The court held that the configuration of the claimed disposable plastic nursing container was a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration of the claimed container was significant.). In the absence of persuasive evidence that the shape of the diffuser is significant, the feature is considered to be obvious.

The prior art article does not specify the flow capacity of the air blower. However, the article does recognize the relationship between the amount of oxygen available and the growth and viability of the aerobic microorganisms.

The courts have ruled that "[W]here the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation." In re Aller, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955).

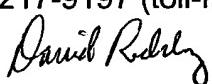
Accordingly, the claimed flow rates are considered to be obvious.

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. USP 6,281,001 B1 (McNelly) is closely related to the claimed invention.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David A Redding whose telephone number is 571-272-1276. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri. 6:00 - 3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Warden can be reached on 571-272-1281. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



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